



CONTACT US: [SUICIDEPREVENTION@DMH.CA.GOV](mailto:suicideprevention@dmh.ca.gov)

The Office of Suicide Prevention has compiled a list of their most frequently asked questions from the public. This list is constantly expanding, and we are happy to help find answers to your questions. If you would like to ask the Office of Suicide Prevention a question, please email us at suicideprevention@dmh.ca.gov.

Questions on...

- Data, statistics and reports
 - [County Data Profiles](#)
- Suicide prevention resources for specific settings and populations
 - [I am concerned about someone who may be suicidal. Does the OSP have any advice?](#)
 - [Are there any suicide prevention resources available in other languages?](#)
 - [What are some suicide prevention resources for Emergency Departments?](#)
 - [What are some suicide prevention resources for nursing homes?](#)
 - [I heard that suicide rates are very high among older adults. Are best practices available that are specific to older adults?](#)
 - [What are some suicide prevention resources for veterans?](#)
- Services and trainings
 - [Does the OSP host support groups?](#)
 - [How can I become certified in crisis intervention?](#)
 - [Where can I get suicide prevention posters, wallet cards or other materials free of charge?](#)
 - [I am interested in volunteering to support suicide prevention. Where can I find opportunities to volunteer in my community?](#)
- Crisis centers and hotlines
 - [My county/organization is interested in creating a suicide prevention hotline. What steps should we take to start one?](#)

County Data Profiles

County Data Profiles can be found on the [OSP Website](#). County data profiles will be updated in early 2011 to reflect 2008 and 2009. The County Data Profiles are unique in that they compile data from multiple sources in a user-friendly format. If more current data is needed while we are preparing the updated Profiles, please search the [California Department of Public Health EPICenter](#) (Injury Data).

What are some suicide prevention resources for Emergency Departments?

The [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (SPRC) web site offers a wealth of information and resources for suicide prevention. It includes a section specifically about [Emergency Departments](#). Additional resources are listed below:

- [Emergency department means restriction education \(SPRC EBPP Fact Sheet\)](#)
- [Nurses](#) (SPRC Customized Information Series)
- [Patient safety plan template](#)
- Practice guidelines [for psychiatric consultation in the general medical setting](#)



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- [Preventing suicide: A resource for general physicians](#)
- [SAFE-T pocket card](#) guides clinicians through five steps which address the patient's level of suicide risk and suggest appropriate interventions.
- [The suicidal patient assessment and care: An educational video for primary care physicians](#) provides clear, concise guidelines to follow in assessing suicide risk in their patients.
- [Suicide risk: A guide for evaluation and triage poster](#)
- [Using the "Is your patient suicidal?" poster and Triage Guide](#)
- [Working with emergency departments: Expanding crisis center resources and partnerships](#)

What are some suicide prevention resources for nursing homes?

The following organizations offer resources and services that may be of assistance:

- American Association of Suicidology [factsheet](#) on older adult suicide
- Canadian Coalition for Senior's Mental Health (CCSMH) [toolkit](#) "Late Life Suicide Prevention Toolkit – Suicide Assessment and Prevention for Older Adults: Life Saving Tools for Health Care Providers"
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [toolkit](#) "Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for Senior Living Communities"
- Institute of Aging [Friendship Line](#), reaching out to older adults and offering emotional and wellness resources. This line also provides independent seniors with counseling services, crisis intervention, medication reminders, well-being check and information and referral for additional care
- California Department of Aging, liaison to the Department of Mental Health, [Lin Benjamin](#). Lin promotes older adult mental health at state and local level organization and is a valuable contact for individuals who are seeking resources for mental health and suicide prevention resources for the older adult population.

Does the OSP host survivor support groups?

The OSP is an education and resource office, we do not provide direct services or host support groups. However, there are many California-based organizations that offer survivor support, including:

- The accredited [California Crisis Centers](#), which include [Bay Area accredited crisis centers](#)
- Survivor support networks, including [Friends for Survival](#) and [Fresno Survivors of Suicide](#)

My county/organization is interested in creating a crisis hotline. What steps should we take to start one?

The first step is to ensure that there is not already an existing hotline that covers your area. California has 10 accredited crisis centers, nine of which are part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (to view a list of the California-based crisis centers CAN WE LINK TO A LIST OF ALL CRISIS CENTERS NOT JUST LIFELINE). Accredited crisis center hotlines are available 24/7 and are managed by a team of highly trained staff and volunteers who have in-depth knowledge and experience in crisis management and intervention. They also provide a range of resources for communities, callers, and survivors including training, education, postvention or follow-up services, and support groups. [Crisis centers that are members of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) are integrated into a network of accredited crisis centers across the country. This ensures that anyone who calls into the National Suicide



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Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) will speak with a trained crisis counselor at one of over 150 accredited crisis centers across the country. Callers are routed to the nearest crisis center based on the number they are calling from.

Promoting California's accredited crisis centers and the use of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK) within your community will ensure that all individuals in crisis will receive evidence-based counseling, intervention, local referral and follow-up by trained crisis counselors.

If you want to learn more about the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and California's ten accredited crisis centers, please see the [Office of Suicide Prevention's Suicide Prevention Hotline Survey Report](#).

How can I become certified in suicide prevention or crisis intervention?

Many suicide prevention training programs are available. In general, there are four broadly recognized crisis intervention certification programs that train individuals to identify suicide risk and intervention. These include [ASIST](#) (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and [ASIST T4T](#) (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Teaching for Teachers); [QPR](#) (Question, Persuade & Refer;) and [Mental Health First Aid](#). Their websites have more information regarding their training opportunities.

Your [local accredited crisis center](#) may also be able to provide you with more information. These crisis centers often provide crisis intervention training for community members. Their training programs are accredited and are considered to be the "gold standard" for crisis intervention work. You might also consider becoming a trained volunteer at the crisis center nearest you. Please contact the crisis centers directly for more information.

Contact your county mental health or behavioral health department. With funding from the Mental Health Services Act a number of counties are sponsoring suicide prevention training. Find your county contact [here](#).

Where can I get suicide prevention posters, wallet cards or other materials free of charge?

*Magnets, wallet-sized cards, posters and other material can be ordered free of charge by visiting the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) web sites. The Lifeline number will connect callers in your community with a network of over 150 crisis centers across the country, nine of which are located in California. In addition, the **California Youth Crisis Line** offers posters that can be [downloaded from their web site](#). Finally, the **Trevor Project** operates 24/7 crisis hotline that is specifically geared for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/questioning youth. [Their "Survival Kit" can be ordered for free and from their website](#) comes with a variety of different types of posters that advertise their hotline.*



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I am concerned about a friend/family member/acquaintance that may be suicidal. Does the OSP have any advice?

It is important that you contact a suicide prevention hotline to discuss your concerns right away. Please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), which will route you to the nearest crisis center in your area. You will be able to speak with a trained crisis counselor, who can offer life-saving advice and point to some resources in the area in which your friend/family member/acquaintance resides. You can also encourage your friend/family member/acquaintance to call the Lifeline directly. Learn more on identifying [signs of suicide](#) and [what else you can do to help](#).

What are some suicide prevention resources for veterans?

- *The Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline is available 24/7 to connect callers to a crisis counselor that is trained to respond to the unique mental health needs of veterans. Veterans can call the Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and press "1" to be routed to the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline.*
- *The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline also hosts a 24/7 online chat for homeless veterans, as well as a 24/7 online chat for veterans in emotional distress. You can learn more about both chat options [here](#).*
- *Other crisis hotlines and warm lines for Veterans include:*
 - [National Hotline for Homeless Veterans](#) (1-877-424-3838)
 - [National Caregiver Support Line](#) (1-855-260-3274)
 - [Marin Corps Suicide Prevention "DSTRESS" Hotline](#) (1-877-476-7734)
- *[The California Network of Care](#) is a comprehensive listing local services for veterans, service members and their families*
- *Free counseling services by licensed mental health providers who understand the experiences of veterans, service members and military families are provided by [The Soldier's Project](#) and the [Coming Home Project](#).*
- *You can find services at your local [Veterans Affairs \(VA\) facility](#). You can also contact your local [County Veterans Service Organization](#) to receive more information about benefits and services for Veterans, service members, and families.*
- *California is committed to ensure that Veterans receive the benefits and services they are entitled to upon their return home. Please refer to the [California Department of Veterans Affairs Operation Welcome Home](#) for more information on services for education, employment, and personal health and mental health. If you are a Veteran from any era, please be sure to fill out a [Reintegration Form](#) so that CDVA can contact you to provide more services. The CDVA [Veterans Resource Book](#) contains a wealth of useful information.*

I am really interested in volunteering to support suicide prevention. Where can I find opportunities to volunteer in my community?

- *Volunteer at a local crisis center: There are 10 accredited crisis centers in California, the majority of which rely on highly trained volunteers to answer their crisis hotlines. [Contact your local crisis center](#) and ask for a list of volunteer opportunities and trainings to become a crisis counselor.*



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- Participate in your local [Out of the Darkness Community Walk](#). The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention hosts walks around the country that raise money for suicide prevention research, education, outreach and advocacy programs.

Are there any suicide prevention materials or resources available in other languages?

The [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (SPRC), the [American Association of Suicidology](#) (AAS), and the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) have extensive materials on suicide prevention in Spanish, which can be downloaded for free.

In addition, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has a 24/7 Spanish-language crisis hotline option. To contact the Spanish-language crisis hotline, please call 1-800-273-TALK, and press “2”.

What does the OSP do and what are some of its activities?

The overarching goal of the Office of Suicide Prevention is to implement and support a full range of strategies, from prevention through crisis intervention and postvention to prevent suicide and suicidal behaviors in California.

The role of the Office of Suicide Prevention is to:

- 1) Coordinate national, state and local activities to maximize resources
- 2) Advise and assist statewide, regional and local programs, policies and practices
- 3) Organize and disseminate information to a wide range of providers and consumers

Some of the specific OSP activities include:

- The [OSP website](#) is updated regularly to include current information, resources, services and trainings
- Create educational [fact sheets](#)
- Develop [county data profiles](#)
- Disseminate [OSP eNews](#) to stakeholders across California
- Coordinate local, statewide and national suicide prevention efforts and provide suicide prevention technical assistance through our [local, statewide and national partnerships](#). These partnerships include [County OSP Liaisons](#) and the [California Crisis Center Consortium](#)
- Promote best practices found in the [Best Practices Registry](#) and the [National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices](#).
- Support suicide prevention efforts for high-risk groups, including Veterans, LGBTQ youth and older adults

I heard that suicide rates are very high among older adults. Are there older adult specific resources that can help?

There are many programs and practices listed in the [National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs](#) and the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center Best Practice Registry](#) that promote older adult mental health. The following are pertinent to older adult suicide prevention:



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- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2010): [*Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Suicide: a Toolkit for Senior Living Communities*](#)
- National Institute of Mental Health (2006): [*Prevention of Suicide in Primary Care Elderly: Collaborative Trial \(PROSPECT\)*](#)
- Canadian Coalition for Senior's Mental Health (2006): [*Late Life Suicide Prevention Toolkit – Suicide Assessment and Prevention for Older Adult - Life Saving Tools for Health Care Providers*](#)